

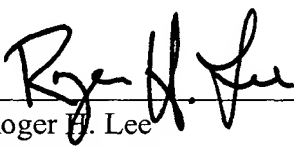
Document No. 2000-327939 (*JP '939*).<sup>1</sup> As such, perfecting the foreign priority claim in the present application would remove *JP '939* from qualifying as §102(a) prior art.

To perfect the foreign priority claim, attached hereto for the Examiner's consideration is an English translation of the Japanese priority application, together with a statement that the translation of the Japanese priority application is accurate. Applicants submit that in light of the perfecting of the foreign priority claim, *JP '939* does not qualify as §102(a) prior art. Moreover, in light of the amendments and remarks set forth in the previously filed Amendment, further and favorable action in the form a Notice of Allowance is believed to be next in order, and such action is earnestly solicited.

If there are any questions concerning this paper or the application in general, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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<sup>1</sup>The Japanese priority application was filed on March 27, 2000, which predates the November 28, 2000 publication date of *JP '939*.